

## **Precedent Text as a Special Kind of Code in the Internet Communication**

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**Abstract.** Precedent texts should be considered as one of the most complicated and multifaceted phenomena which a) indicate common background knowledge of the interlocutors if they have such knowledge; b) work as a specific code for positive and negative emotions and ways of their expression, especially in the case of communication via Internet. The article highlights the hypothesis concerning complicity of functions performed by precedent texts, and the changing of their range.

**Keywords:** precedent text, language, communication

### **1. Introduction**

Currently, linguists focus on precedent phenomena. There are many definitions given by various concepts, since a precedent text is a multifaceted phenomenon, it is viewed from different angles. For example, Karaulov [2007, 216] identifies such characteristics of precedent texts as the significance for a native speaker in cognitive and emotional terms; the transpersonal nature of precedent texts (linguistic communities can operate them and moreover, according to Karaulov, they are an asset of native speakers at different time intervals); the repetition and high frequency of precedent phenomena in texts produced by native speakers in various fields of its application and in different eras of its development. According to Krasnykh, the precedent phenomena include all the stereotypes that have been created within the ethnic and linguistic-cultural community, and asserts that 'there are bundles of predictable vectors of associations, i. e. frame structures behind all phenomena of this kind' [Krasnykh, 2002, 191]. In addition, to understand a precedent text as a phenomenon that includes a number of structures of both phenomenological and linguistic nature: '... all knowledge and ideas are kept in the form of cognitive structures, such as linguistic cognitive structures (LCS) and

phenomenological cognitive structures (PCS). The precedent phenomena can be kept in the form: 1) PCS — invariants of perception of a precedent text and a precedent situation; they can always be verbalised but there is no rigid 'linking' between the LCS, which can foreground a precedent phenomenon, and the PP itself, i.e. when referring to the invariant of perception of a text or situation in communication, it is possible to use different LCS' [Krasnykh, 2002, 192]. The work of Krasnykh also speaks about the so-called cliches (in the case of activation of linguistic cognitive structures) and cliches of consciousness (in the case of the use of phenomenological cognitive structures). In turn, Voroshilova [2010, 127] notes that 'traditionally, today's researchers distinguish two main approaches to the classification of the sources of precedent phenomena, such as the narrow one, based on the genres, types and genres of mere words'; and the broad one (semiotic), in which the precedent phenomenon is viewed as a precedent cultural sign that keeps background knowledge associated with past cultural experience in its various forms [Kushneruk, 2006, 63]. Within the framework of the so-called broad, or semiotic, approach Voroshilova points to the existence of a 'cultural precedent text', which is represented by such varieties as oral lore, oral tradition (a fairy tale, individual folklore images, that function in modern linguistic consciousness as independent national and cultural icons and symbols, for example, Santa Claus, the Grim Reaper etc.), as well as 'pieces of art (literature, cinema, animation)' [Voroshilova, 2010, 128]. It is obvious that this classification of precedent texts is based on the source, that is the field of origin and genre characteristics of the phenomenon that has acquired the status of a precedent one. Since in our work we consider the precedent text of the 19th century, which was initially politicised and became more politically acute during its foregrounding or actualisation in the contexts produced by native speakers of the Russian language in the 21st century, the provisions put forward by Voroshilova that 'precedent texts are 'recognisable', have no cultural or age restrictions...', and also about 'the effectiveness of well-known images as a means of persuasion and a means of influence' [Voroshilova, 2010, 127], it seems necessary to use it as a methodological framework for our work.

## 2. Material and technique of research

As material for research, we have selected fragments of texts presented on the Internet and containing a well-known phrase from A. S. Pushkin 'To Chaadaev' *Our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of op-*

*pressive reign/autocracy*, which, in our opinion, is a vivid example of a precedent phenomenon entering the bright field of consciousness of the Russian-speaking (and — more broadly — one well familiar with the Russian culture but not positioning oneself as a Russian native speaker) recipient. We have chosen as sources-

1) The Russian Language National Corpus (RLNC) (note that the RLNC contains only 13 fragments that contain this precedent text);

2) Websites, which, in particular, include the blog of the fictional Internet troll Lev Sharansky (<https://lev-sharansky2.livejournal.com/>) as well as other resources (excluding the simple placement of the precedent text itself, i. e. poems by A. S. Pushkin, on the Web). In this case, by continuous sampling, we have selected 149 text fragments containing the analysed precedent text, the most typical of which is presented in our work.

In addition, as a methodological basis, we used the method proposed by Leontovich [2011, 21]: ‘The purpose of this method is to show that the generation of cultural meanings results from the interaction of numerous factors that can be tentatively characterised by several parameters: 1) the creation of ‘micro-meanings’ based on culturally specific meanings; 2) combination thereof resulting in the formation of complex cultural meanings; 3) the logic of meaning formation which determines the ‘macro meaning’ of communication’ [Leontovich, 2011, 21]. The researcher offers a clear step-by-step analysis algorithm, which makes it possible to trace ‘the development of meanings in the text, in particular cultural-specific ones, to interpret them, to trace their interconnections and patterns of implementation in the context’ [Leontovich, 2011, 23].

Finally, one of the components of our work is a free associative experiment [Dostovalov, 2005, 18], namely, such a subtype of it as the projective technique ‘Unfinished Sentences’, when the persons being tested are presented with not a single verbal stimulus but several ones united by grammatical connections. The persons should supplement these ‘beginnings’ of sentences with any suitable words, so that the whole sentence has the nature of a completed utterance [Dostovalov, 2005, 19]. The experiment was carried out to confirm the precedent nature of the text in question; the emphasis was put on such a characteristic of this phenomenon as its recognition by native speakers of the language or by those who perceive it as a second language and have sufficient knowledge of the Russian language and culture. Students of the specialty ‘Foreign Philology’ (57 people) were selected as the persons, of which

21 were graduates of Russian schools, 36 were graduates of Kazakh schools (in programs on Russian literature, the study of which in Kazakh schools takes 3 hours a week; represented are masterpieces of the Russian literature including the precedent text under research). The age of the persons was from 19 to 22; gender composition: 87.4 %, or 50 experiment participants were females, and 7 males made up 12.6 % of the total number of participants. The persons were given one part of the phrase, *on remnants of oppressive reign...* and the author of the text was not mentioned. 22 students, or 36 %, could fully recognise and continue this text, as well as name its author, which, in our opinion, sufficiently confirms its precedent nature. 19 students, or 30 %, partially, i.e. with some inaccuracies, reproduced the text and named the author. Finally, the remaining 34 %, or 16 students, could neither continue the text, nor recognise it, nor name the author. Nevertheless, for this age group, which, on the one hand, is a potential target audience of Internet texts and on the other hand, has a sufficient educational level to identify and correctly perceive such texts, the recognition rate is quite high.

The second stage of the experiment consisted of working with the associations that persons had in relation to the given text; we used a similar technique aimed at identifying free associations. The most typical are the following associations, *the destruction of a political system, the creation of a new one, opposition to power* etc. Thus, it became possible to use not only a broad interpretation of the precedent phenomenon but also a narrower interpretation thereof, within which the precedent phenomena are understood as names, statements, texts and situations with metaphorical potential [Brodsky, 2005, 6; Brodsky, 2007, 258]. In the analysis, we also used the position put forward by Gudkov concerning the role of the so-called 'mythological precedents', i.e. nationally determined and minimised representations that are hidden behind a precedent phenomenon (PP). According to Gudkov, 'one of the functions of the cognitive framework, the core components of which are PP, is to set a paradigm of behaviour of members of the linguistic and cultural community. In this regard, for a man of today, the cognitive framework plays a role similar to the role of the mythological system in the life of a traditional community. Various myth researchers have pointed out that one of its main functions is structuring the paradigm of the cultural (social) behaviour accepted in society' [Gudkov, 2003, 118]. The perception of the precedent text chosen by us by the recipients is fully consistent with this provision that precedent phenomena are included in our

speech and, more broadly, our cognitive repertoire, and allow us to decode the information hidden behind them, and are also transformed under the influence of the linguistic and extralinguistic objectives they pursue.

### 3. Outcomes

Text fragments (in all the cited cases, preserved are the spelling and punctuation features of the quoted texts — LM, OS) including the investigated precedent phenomenon, can be characterised by significant pragmatic load; in this context, the use of Pushkin's phrase, which has acquired the status of a precedent text, in its direct meaning, fixed in the *usus*, and with the corresponding evaluative colour (correlated with the positive pole of the rating scale), and the ironic transformation projected onto the negative zone of the evaluative scale.

1) The use of this precedent text as a way of expressing a positive attitude towards a change in the social system and other global changes in society presupposes its inclusion in a broader context as a quotation, for instance, in a number of examples from the Russian Language National Corpus: — *Our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign*, — *Vagin quoted* [Yuzefovich. Kazaroz]; *And Russia will arise from slumber, our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of the oppressive reign...* [Troshev. My War]; cf. the direct quotation in such texts extracted from the RLNC, such as 'Diary of my Meetings' by Annenkov, 'The Tale of the Turgenev Brothers' by Vinogradov, the Diary of Chukovsky as well as Herzen's works chronologically closer to the investigated precedent phenomenon 'My Past and Thoughts', Gilyarovsky's 'Moscow and Muscovites' (didn't he say about us, *Our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign! The speaker was added by a merry neighbour...*) etc.

A similar contextual environment, namely the one levelling the pathos of the precedent text and even in contradiction with it, can be found in a modern Internet text (reviews of one of Bushkov's books): *In reading The Witch, I became more and more disappointed. After all, Mr. Bushkov knows how to write. But why exchange your talent for such crafts? Was the writer forced by the bony hand of hunger to engage in such a thankless job? Well, I will not condemn but only summarise. So, in my opinion, we have, as always, quite a good and light style of storytelling and even an attempt to immerse the reader in the first third of the 19th century at the language level. Unfortunately, there are no more pros here. This is followed by a scanty superficial plot about noth-*

ing, we can safely say. There is also a monarchical idea, which is opportunistic for the present time, how magnificent in the blaze of glory is the dear father, Nikolai 'Palkin' and how unpleasant are the free-thinkers who sold their souls to the devil. And the Poet, our everything, blinded by this brilliance, is no longer so much carried away by such a stupid activity as writing poetry. Oh no! Now he is a zealous apologist for autocracy (hello: '... **'Our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign'**) and puts his heart into something so dear to our Fatherland as serving in the secret police. The fearlessness of the so-called witch unequivocally evokes imperishable images created in the cinema by iron Arnie. After all, figuratively speaking, he breaks through the reinforced concrete walls with his forehead! In general, the plans and actions of the opposing side are as vague as the opposing party itself but we will show them Kuzka's mother (which means showing them what is what) anyway!

Eh, but you could follow the example of the same Martin and create something really worthwhile instead of letting your creative gift blow a whistle. <https://fantlab.ru/autor42/responses?sort=mark&page=all>

The contextual environment is given here in full in order to illustrate the contradiction between it and the precedent text, which does not entirely correspond to either. Bushkov's concept (cognitively, semantically, but also from the standpoint of such phenomena bordering on the precedent phenomena as a stereotype (Pushkin is a singer of freedom), or the review style itself (compare, for example, the familiar hello: **'Our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign'**)

Elements of mixed feelings about the precedent phenomenon can be traced in the text fragment of V. Rozov's work 'Surprise before Life': *of course, we were taught that Pushkin wrote 'In the Depths of Siberian Ores' and '... on remnants of oppressive reign' but still he was a nobleman and even a chamber junker (yunker), visited the tsar...*

A similar dual effect is produced by the interaction between this precedent text and the situationally and pragmatically ambiguous text of Okunevskaya 'Tatiana's Day', since Pushkin's text went through the perception of the wardress: *I read poetry in a whisper, I sing in a whisper, the wardress was bewitched by Lermontov, Vertinsky; she stops knocking with the key when I read 'My friend, believe me that with thunder, the star of joy will rise again, our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign', she's listening... and slowly, like when we were little, sobbing, everyone fell asleep...* [Okunevskaya. Tatyana's Day, 1998]. Of course, the contextual environment

and presupposed information gives the recipient the opportunity to decode the ironic background (everyone fell asleep); but irony here is more a shade of the emotional palette than its main tone.

It is much more obvious that the correlation of a positively perceived precedent phenomenon and a situation when the desire for freedom proclaimed by the poet obtained through cardinal changes in society, correlates, on the contrary, with the denial of such cardinal changes. Thus, there is a kind of cognitive dissonance between the original text and the meaning assigned to it in the precedent (including the pragmatic one) and its use in this context as a precedent: *Nourishing, hilarious, trouble-free, Russian donuts, jam doughnuts, buns, Bolsheviks will end in two weeks, 'and our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign'...* [Don Aminado. Train on the Third Path, 1954].

2) The second type of transformation of the axiological information contained in the precedent text, namely, positive evaluative information, can be seen in those cases when the author of a broad context clearly argues with the creator of the precedent text by evaluating the message embedded as having sharply negative consequences: ***Our names will be incised with wonder On remnants of oppressive reign!*** *During the revolution and the Civil War, 12,500,000 people were killed. During the repression, 4.5–4.8 million were convicted, of which 1.1 million were shot. Was that what you wanted? Or they wanted the best but they themselves wrote about the Russian revolt, senseless and merciless. Well, we got it.* <https://moe-online.ru/nn/poetry/500442> Often, the 'one-sided polemics' of communicants, who are at a considerable distance from each other on the chronological axis, i. e. the author of the context containing the precedent phenomenon, and the creator of the precedent phenomenon itself, A. S. Pushkin, is based on the process of decoding both the precedent text and adjacent fragments (which have also passed into the category of precedent phenomena): ***Our names will be incised with wonder On remnants of oppressive reign!*** *That means oppressive reign/autocracy will end. You will fulfil someone else's will. AUTOCRACY is the ability of a person, a politician, a state to govern by himself/itself (to set goals, choose the methods of achieving them, overcome the opposition of those who want to them deprive of it, the enslavers). Of course, your names will be incised on remnants of oppressive reign, the memory of the people certainly guarantees this. We had such a comrade Gorbachev, So, he acted in full concordance with this poem by Pushkin.*



1. People had an impulse to make life in the country better, hope for change etc.... 'dedicate our soul's elation'.

2. There were comrade Gorbachev and Co. who captivated this generally good minded crowd with a star of joy, and who lived at that time remember this well, since there were no indifferent people at that time.

3. Russia arose from slumber, let us remember perestroika, acceleration, glasnost, how Gorby shone with his gift for the striking phrase. Then in 1991, when Yeltsin was made much of and carried in people's arms. (Actually, his crowd of people with 'their soul's elation dedicated' blinded by the 'star of joy' brought him into power in their arms.)

4. The USSR was ruined, although it was not autocratic on a global scale and was like a Masonic structure; it still had a certain level of autocracy. So, 'autocracy was ruined' by having plunged the country into slavish dependence on the West. 5. 20 years later, people remembered very well who they owe. 'Our names will be incised on remnants of oppressive reign!' It will certainly be so. Gorby even celebrated his anniversary in London, closer to his masters and away from those who remember his name quite well. Yeltsin, although deceased, is still not thought kindly of. <https://eujine-alfa.livejournal.com/tag/%D0%97%D1%8E%D0%B3%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2>

There is a sharp negative perception of such precedent phenomena as **the star of joy, our soul's elation** that correlate with the same source. It is vital to emphasise that the author of the post carries out linguistic reflection by correlating the concept of **autocracy** with the positive part of the rating scale, updating the meaning of the structural components of the lexical unit, which was not implied by the precedent phenomenon in question.

A similar but not identical situation could be seen in the following fragment: Yesterday I went out into the courtyard and heard these words known since my childhood: **'And Russia will arise from slumber, our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign'**. Those words were said by a resident of a neighbouring house, whom I know, Pyotr Stepanovich, a pensioner, a former teacher of the Russian language and literature in a secondary school, who worked in both the Soviet times and for several years after. Should he not know Pushkin's words written by the poet about two hundred years ago? Pyotr Stepanovich said those words to his sister Galina Stepanovna, she lives in our house, her elder brother has often visited her for two years. Galina Stepanovna is also a pensioner, and also worked in the same school as a primary school teacher. I did not hear the beginning of the conversation between brother



and sister, but according to the subsequent words of Galina, I understood what it was about: — I don't know how and when our Russia will **arise from some kind of slumber**, and I don't quite understand what kind of such a slumber, from which it does not wake up in any way, lethargic or historical. With my pension, which I earned at school for thirty-five years, with almost every day price increases, I will really soon arise into eternal sleep. (<https://kerchtt.ru/ischezli-yunye-zabavy-k-chaadaevu-pushkin-aleksandr-sergeevich-stihi-k-chaadaevu/>). Ironically, the text preceding the precedent phenomenon we have chosen is played out (**our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign**, it is a natural continuation, as a result of the transformed phrase Russia will arise from slumber. The poetic pathos and stylistic affiliation of the precedent text are diminished by the contextual environment as a whole and the inclusion of indefinite pronouns by transforming both the stylistic affiliation of the text and giving it a colloquial character, and its evaluative flavour.

In a number of cases, there is also the use of a precedent phenomenon as a title that formalises the main communicative objective of the text, without subsequently foregrounding it in the text itself but using the effect of implicit presence: **These names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign**. For some time, different people, who were normally related to the judicial system, from tribunes of various heights told us that the law had not been the authority of the court, the law of the autocracy was over. Putting the idea into practice did not always end well but that did not stop anyone. Grain yields fell. However, anything can grow from such grains on the Russian soil. The stone birch is also a birch by name but you will understand the difference as soon as you try to cut it down or burn it. It is rather an anti-birch. This is all because it grows on the rocky slopes of the hills. So, our whole axiology sprouted in the judges' consciousness as an outlandish baobab. Many judges decided that the rule of law was over, and if there is no god, then everything is allowed. They have been diligently sweetened up for several years that there is nothing but YOU. It is clear that some have fallen into euphoria. ([https://zakon.ru/blog/2014/10/26/i\\_na\\_oblomkax\\_samovlastya\\_napishut\\_eti\\_ime-na](https://zakon.ru/blog/2014/10/26/i_na_oblomkax_samovlastya_napishut_eti_ime-na)). We also draw attention to the fact that the precedent text was subjected to the grammatical, semantic and pragmatic transformations due to the component replacement (**our names/these names**). The use of another pronoun creates the effect of distancing from the meaning of the precedent text; the author of the Internet text seems to contradicting himself/herself to those whose names **will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive**

*reign*; at the same time, the evaluative plan of the precedent phenomenon in this case was not changed, and the axiological connection with the original precedent text did not undergo any transformations either (the key concept of *oppressive reign /autocracy* is linked with the same evaluation sign as in Pushkin's text here).

Contexts containing the precedent phenomenon examined in a number of other precedent texts have been included in this group. Moreover, the use of a number of precedent phenomena within the framework of a relatively small text fragment creates the effect of oversaturation, redundancy, which transforms the evaluation sign to the opposite one: ... *to Paris to walk along the dark alleys, and took with him the keys for the 19th century, and everything seemed to turn out as wished but strangely somehow Akakys Akakieviches got overcoats, but at once they put on marshal's shoulder straps, and their voice cut through, the madman's notes crawled out of the yellow houses and began to smash the Morganists and cosmopolitans for some reason, Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov regretted the old woman, learned, and hit a home run, but still looked at life from the class angle and had it coming, and everything turned out as they wanted: it rose, that very star, and names were incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign, and then they were erased and some others written, and then added more, and then all erased, then others written, then Malaya Zemlya (The Minor Land) and Tselina (Virgin Lands) were written, and then began to collect remnants in order to rebuild the oppressive reign/autocracy with them and damned questions arose over us, hung and collapsed, rubbed into dust, it was a bit rubbish!* [Alexander Terekhov, Kommunka, 1995–2005]. In addition to the ironic oversaturation, we note the play on the precedent phenomenon and actualisation/ foregrounding, along with its main meaning of action (*writing names*), a number of appositional and at the same time contradictory actions without specifying the actant (*written, erased and others written, more added, erased*). There is also the destruction of the effect set by the precedent text by indicating the opposite action (*began to collect remnants* in order to *rebuild the oppressive reign/autocracy with them*)...

Cf. also fragments extracted from L. Sharansky's blog: *What even General Vlasov would approve, who, being a committed communist, challenged the cannibalistic regime of Stalin, who returned the country to the imperial path instead of the ideals of the world revolution by Leiba Davidovich Trotsky. We'll change henceforth the old tradition, and our names will be incised with*

**wonder on remnants of oppressive reign.** It is not right living on lies. For your and our freedom...

...A fire will flare up from a spark, **and our names will be incised with wonder on remnants of oppressive reign.** After all, nobody but us. Balls, beauties, Beryozka (Soviet retail store), deficit. Schubert's waltzes and a reprimand by the party committee. The Russia that we have lost. We'll change henceforth the old tradition. In the struggle we will gain our rights. Workers of the world, unite. We will fan global fire to defy all bourgeoisie. All power to the Constituent Assembly! The results of the 20th Congress of the CPSU to life! We are the power here. So, let us win! The precedent text in question is placed in a number of other precedent phenomena, those similar in semantics and pragmatics as well as directly opposite ones. So, precedent texts **From a spark will kindle a flame; we'll change henceforth the old tradition; we will fan global fire to defy all bourgeoisie**, which have a high pragmatic load and a close associative connection with Russian history and culture and decoded that way by recipients, native speakers of the Russian language, are very close to the text in question, semantically, pragmatically and functionally. On the other hand, there are precedent phenomena like the **Russia that we have lost** as well as the parodic use of rhythm and syntactic structures of the famous song of Bala, the beauty, Beryozka, deficit. Schubert's waltzes and a reprimand by the party committee (there is an associative connection with the song How Delightful Evenings in Russia which also became the source of a number of precedent phenomena and even Internet memes, in particular, such as the *crunch of French bread*). Such a context transforms the evaluative sign of the precedent phenomenon in question into its opposite by creating the effect of evaluative inversion.

The three types of case text's actualisation/ foregrounding differ not only in the field of semantics and pragmatics; they perform different functions, which is largely based on the difference in decoding.

#### 4. Conclusion

As can be seen from the material presented, a precedent phenomenon similar to the one under the research is multifunctional and serves to foreground a number of associations in the mind of the recipient. Moreover, the transformation of the functions performed by the precedent text makes it possible to say that the precedent phenomenon is undergoing a comprehensive rethinking, in a structural, semantic, pragmatic and axiological

way. It is also important that a precedent text lives in the minds of native speakers as well as persons for whom Russian is a second language and who at the same time demonstrate the presence of associations in the bright field of consciousness, which allows correctly decoding the precedent text, which is preceded by isolating it from the syntagmatic chain and recognition. All this is confirmed by our experiment.

In our opinion, three ways of foregrounding the precedent phenomenon (preserving semantics and pragmatics, transforming up to inversion of the evaluative sign and stylistic characteristics of the precedent text, as well as the inclusion of the precedent text in the syntagmatic chain of similar ones and, accordingly, the devaluation of its emotive and evaluative potential) emphasised in this work do not exhaust the whole variety of cases of using such a multilateral method of transferring information. We see further research potential in the development of the problem of the formation of the text as a precedent, as well as in the research into the reasons that give rise to the inversion of the evaluative sign inherent in the original precedent text.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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## **Bestiary in Modern Media Art (Based on the Tales of P. P. Bazhov and the “Shan Hai Jing” Materials)**

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**Abstract.** The relevance of the study of bestiary in media art is due to the need to trace the links between traditional and digital culture in the modern world. The methodology of semiotic analysis of wild culture codes is used. Bestiary codes of the Ural and Chinese cultures are considered as such codes. The subject of the research focus is the bestiary of Bazhov's tales and “Shan Hai Jing” in media art. The goal is to identify the forms of existence of the Ural and Chinese tales in contemporary media art. The conclusion is made about the content continuity of traditional and modern media art. Bazhov's tales are reinterpreted in the form of literary and pictorial works of modern authors, and the Chinese legends “Shan Hai Jing” in the form of animated films, com-